
For Immediate Release

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NRCS Offers \$1.03 Million for Wildlife Habitat Improvement in New Jersey

New Jersey Funding Opportunities for 2006 Announced

Somerset, January 12, 2006 – USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Tony Kramer announced that \$1.03 million Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds are available for New Jersey in 2006. This voluntary Farm Bill program provides technical and financial assistance for the implementation of wildlife habitat improvement practices on non-Federal lands. Mr. Kramer outlined funding opportunities for private landowners and land managers and for eligible government or non-government organizations and provided closing dates for the 2006 application periods.

Applicants who want to manage wildlife habitat on their farmland-assessed property can sign up for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program by contacting the NRCS office that serves their county. NRCS can contract with eligible applicants to address one or more of the habitat restoration priorities of WHIP, which include lands located in Lower Cape May (a priority wildlife habitat area); lands providing habitat for the federally threatened bog turtle; lands dedicated to early successional wildlife habitat, such as grassland restoration; lands dedicated to riparian wildlife habitat; or control of invasive exotic vegetation. Approved applicants can be reimbursed for up to 75% of project costs. **Applications received by close of business Friday, February 3, 2006, will be considered for 2006 funding.**

In addition, Mr. Kramer announced a statewide competition for Contribution Agreements through WHIP for eligible government or non-government organizations or individuals. Contribution Agreements provide up to 50% of the eligible and reasonable costs of a qualified project on non-federal lands. NRCS expects to fund up to 20 proposals under this Request for Proposal, with a minimum award of \$5000. Wildlife concerns selected for potential funding through WHIP Contribution Agreements for fiscal year 2006 include: Bog turtle, American woodcock, Bobwhite quail, Grassland birds, and wetland function and health. **Contribution Agreement proposals received in the NRCS New Jersey State Office in Somerset, NJ by 3 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Friday, March 3, 2006, will be considered for 2006 funding.** The Request for Proposal (RFP), applicant and project eligibility requirements, application procedures, and award criteria for proposed contribution agreement projects are accessible through www.grants.gov.

New Jersey WHIP program information, application materials, NRCS Office locations, and contact information are provided online at <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip>. Or contact your local NRCS office or Janice Reid, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, janice.reid@nj.usda.gov, phone: (732) 537-6042.

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